

64-2925

April 21, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON  
General Counsel

FROM A. W. DULLES

SUBJECT: Visit to The Honorable Harry S Truman  
Friday afternoon, April 17, 2 p.m.

On April 13 I sent a telegram to Mr. Truman that I would be in Kansas City on April 17 and would like to see him if he was free and wished to see me at any time during the day, as my engagement was to make an address in the evening in Kansas City. Within a matter of hours, I had a telephone call from Mr. Truman's secretary, Miss Rose A. Conway, office telephone Clifton 2 3678, home telephone Highland 4 5325, stating that Mr. Truman would be very happy to see me. We agreed upon 2 p.m. at the Truman Library.

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We reached the Library a few minutes early and Mr. Truman had not yet returned from lunch. When he came in, he greeted us warmly, and all three of us went into his study in the Library. We had a pleasant talk about CIA work for a few minutes.

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After reminiscing a bit about our early meetings in the Library, where I had briefed President Truman on behalf of President Eisenhower on several occasions, we got down to more serious business relating to the problems

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with which the Agency is faced, as I viewed them, as one who is not following the day-to-day work of the Agency but is nevertheless familiar with its problems. I told Mr. Truman that he was one of my heroes for the stand he had taken in the Greek-Turkish situation in 1947 and then in Korea. I told him how much I felt the country owed to him, to his courage and decision; and I told him that I proposed to tell my audience that night how I felt (and I later did so). I said I understood that he was going to celebrate his 80th birthday, and we joked a bit about our respective ages. I may add that I found Mr. Truman more quick and alert than I had been given to believe he would be. He has taken on some weight, obviously slowed down a bit, but he seemed quick and interested.

I then reviewed with Mr. Truman the part he had had in supplementing the overt Truman Doctrine affecting Greece and Turkey with the procedures largely implemented by CIA to meet the creeping subversion of communism, which could not be met by open intervention, military aid, under the Truman plan. I reviewed the various covert steps which had been taken under his authority in suppressing the Huk rebellion in the Philippines, of the problems we had faced during the Italian elections in 1948, and outlined in some detail the various points raised in the memorandum furnished me by Cord Meyer - in addition to the Philippines and Italy, the organization of the Free Europe Committee and Radio Free Europe, keeping hope alive in the Satellite countries, etc.

Mr. Truman followed all this with keen interest, interjected reminiscences of his own, recalled vividly the whole Italian election problem, as well as the Huk situation. I then showed him the article in The Washington Post of December 22, 1963, which I suggested seemed to me to be a misrepresentation of his position. I pointed out the number of National Security Actions (Action #4 and Action 10-2) which he had taken which dealt with covert operations by the CIA. He studied attentively the Post story and seemed quite astounded at it. In fact, he said that this was all

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wrong. He then said that he felt it had made a very unfortunate impression. He asked me if he could keep the article. I gave it to him and then showed him the memorandum from which I had been developing my points so as to get the dates and operations in accurate relationship. Then he expressed a desire to keep the memorandum. I said that this had several items that he might not wish to keep, including the last page, which I eliminated from the memorandum and attach hereto. I also made one or two changes in the memorandum and said I felt he should mark the memorandum "secret". Mr. Truman said "No, mark it 'top secret'", which I promptly did, and told him how carefully this memorandum should be handled. I asked him to destroy it and not add it to his files even though I knew how many secret papers he had in the Library. (Later I spoke to his personal secretary, Miss Rose Conway and told her to keep her eye on the memorandum and to see that it was in absolutely safe hands until it was destroyed.

Our talk, which lasted about one half hour, was completely friendly. At no time did Mr. Truman express other than complete agreement with the viewpoint I expressed and several times said he would see what he could do about it, to leave it in his hands. He obviously was highly disturbed at The Washington Post article.

As we left [redacted]

[redacted] he took us into a side room in the Library and showed us with obvious pride the replica of the battleship Missouri, which had just been given to him that very morning.

I told Mr. Truman of my high regard for John McCone, of the high caliber of the men who were working in CIA, and that I thought it was doing an excellent job. I also touched upon the false attacks that had been made upon CIA in connection with the Vietnam situation and President Kennedy's repudiation of these attacks. I would suggest for Mr. McCone's consideration that he might wish to send a message to President Truman on his 80th birthday, which I believe is May 8. There is to be a considerable celebration on that date in Independence, and a message

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referring to President Truman in connection with the organization of the CIA would come at a very helpful time. I told him of the important work that his old friend Clark Clifford was doing as Chairman of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board. He seemed very much interested to hear of this.

I cannot predict what will come of all this. It is even possible, maybe probable, that he will do nothing when he thinks it over. He may, of course, consult with those, whoever they are, who induced him to make the original statement. However, I think it would be useful to follow up this approach through Clark Clifford and through the message from Mr. McCone, and possibly in other ways. That, I leave in your hands. I would be glad if you would see to it that this memorandum is seen by Mr. Helms and Mr. Cord Meyer. They can decide what they wish to do in connection with the Director. Of course, this may be made available to him if you and they deem wise.

I return herewith your note to me, including your memorandum to the Director of 3 April 1964 and the last page of Cord Meyer's undated memorandum to me. The Cord Meyer memorandum bears no indication of having come from the CIA. I did not suggest to Mr. Truman that it was other than a working memorandum I had prepared.

AWD

Enclosures

SENDER WILL CHECK CLASSIFICATION TOP AND BOTTOM  
UNCLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL SECRET

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP

TO	NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE	INITIALS
1	DDCI	23 Apr	LBR
2	EX DIR	24 Apr	
3	DDI - DDIP sent DCI a copy		
4	Mr. Christen		
5			
6			

ACTION	DIRECT REPLY	PREPARE REPLY
APPROVAL	DISPATCH	RECOMMENDATION
COMMENT	FILE	RETURN
CONCURRENCE	INFORMATION	SIGNATURE

Remarks:

For your information.

Make sure DCI sees

Ex Dir: Please follow up on May 8 birthday message

FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER

FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO. DATE

Richard Helms, DD/P 3 C 34 23/1/64

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[redacted] will see that this is done -- told him  
letter should reach Independence before 6 May  
as the celebration is on that date. (This info  
from DD/P who obtained it from Clifford.)

O/ExecDir/rcm

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